

MINUTES | NEWS & NOTES



Jeet Heer

5 months ago



AYEZ NURELDINE/AFP/Getty

How suspicious should we be of Gulf countries' donations to academic institutions? *The Financial Times* has published an investigation into academic institutions that receive funding from Gulf state countries. This has become a salient issue since the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which highlighted the human rights abuses common to these countries. It's only likely to become more contentious with the news that special counsel Robert Mueller is expanding his investigation to look at the influence of Middle Eastern money on American politics.

As *The Daily Beast* reports, "While one part of the Mueller team has indicted Russian spies and troll-masters, another cadre has been spending its time focusing on how Middle Eastern countries pushed cash to Washington politicians in an attempt to sway policy under President Trump's administration. Various witnesses affiliated with the Trump campaign have been questioned about their conversations with deeply connected individuals from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, according to people familiar with the

probe.”

The political influence can be seen as part of a much broader campaign to influence civil society. As *The Financial Times* notes, Gulf nations have been bountiful in their funding of academic institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom.

“Confident, assertive and keen to exert soft power, Gulf countries have been pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into top academic institutions in the UK and US for years,” *The Financial Times* reports. “Between them the six Gulf states—Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman—have provided \$2.2bn to US universities since the beginning of 2012 to June this year, according to a Financial Times analysis of the US education department’s Foreign Gifts and Contracts Report. The Gulf total represents just under a quarter of all foreign gifts and contracts over that period. Qatar, the world’s richest state in per capita terms, led with \$1.3bn, followed by Saudi Arabia with \$580.5m and the UAE with \$213m.”

In the wake of the investigation into Khashoggi’s killing and evidence pointing to the conclusion it was done at the behest of the Saudi government, this funding has become more controversial. Harvard University has decided not to renew a fellowship program financed by Mohammed bin Salman’s charity. Conversely, MIT, which has been debating the issue, is likely to continue receiving Saudi funds.

Academics interviewed by the newspaper says one major problem with the funding is that it leads to self-censorship. Harvard post-doctoral fellow Bergan Draege claims that taking this funding makes scholars wary of studying gender rights and democracy. “The main difference is more of a focus towards the donor countries, and the output targeting that country focuses less so on certain topics,” he told *The Financial Times*. “It emphasizes some of the issues and not other issues [gender rights and democracy]. We don’t know if there’s a direct causal link, though.”



December 21, 2018



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BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/Getty

Turkish president was shocked that Trump went along with demand for Syrian withdrawal. The Associated Press is reporting that President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw troops from Syria crystallized during a December 14 phone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. According to the news agency, the decision was "made hastily, without consulting his national security team or allies, and over strong objections from virtually everyone involved in the fight against the Islamic State group, according to U.S. and Turkish officials."

One of the surprising details of the report is that Erdogan himself was taken aback at how successful he was in convincing Trump on the Syrian matter. Before the phone call, the consensus position that the Trump administration had reached, backed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, was that Trump would tell Erdogan to back off from his threats to attack Kurdish forces in Syria.

But during the phone conversation, Trump threw away the script and agreed with his Turkish counterpart. As AP relates, Trump started by reiterating the message of backing off. But then a change occurred:

Erdogan, though, quickly put Trump on the defensive, reminding him that he had repeatedly said the only reason for U.S. troops to be in Syria was to defeat the Islamic State and that the group had been 99 percent defeated. "Why are you still there?" the second official said Erdogan asked Trump, telling him that the Turks could deal with the remaining IS militants.

Trump then posed Erdogan's question to his National Security Advisor John Bolton, who was participating in the phone call. Bolton admitted that the Islamic State had indeed lost 99 per cent of its territory but said that it was in America's interest to make sure the group did not enjoy a resurgence.

Trump was not dissuaded, according to the officials, who said the president quickly capitulated by

pledging to withdraw, shocking both Bolton and Erdogan.

Caught off guard, Erdogan cautioned Trump against a hasty withdrawal, according to one official. While Turkey has made incursions into Syria in the past, it does not have the necessary forces mobilized on the border to move in and hold the large swaths of northeastern Syria where U.S. troops are positioned, the official said.

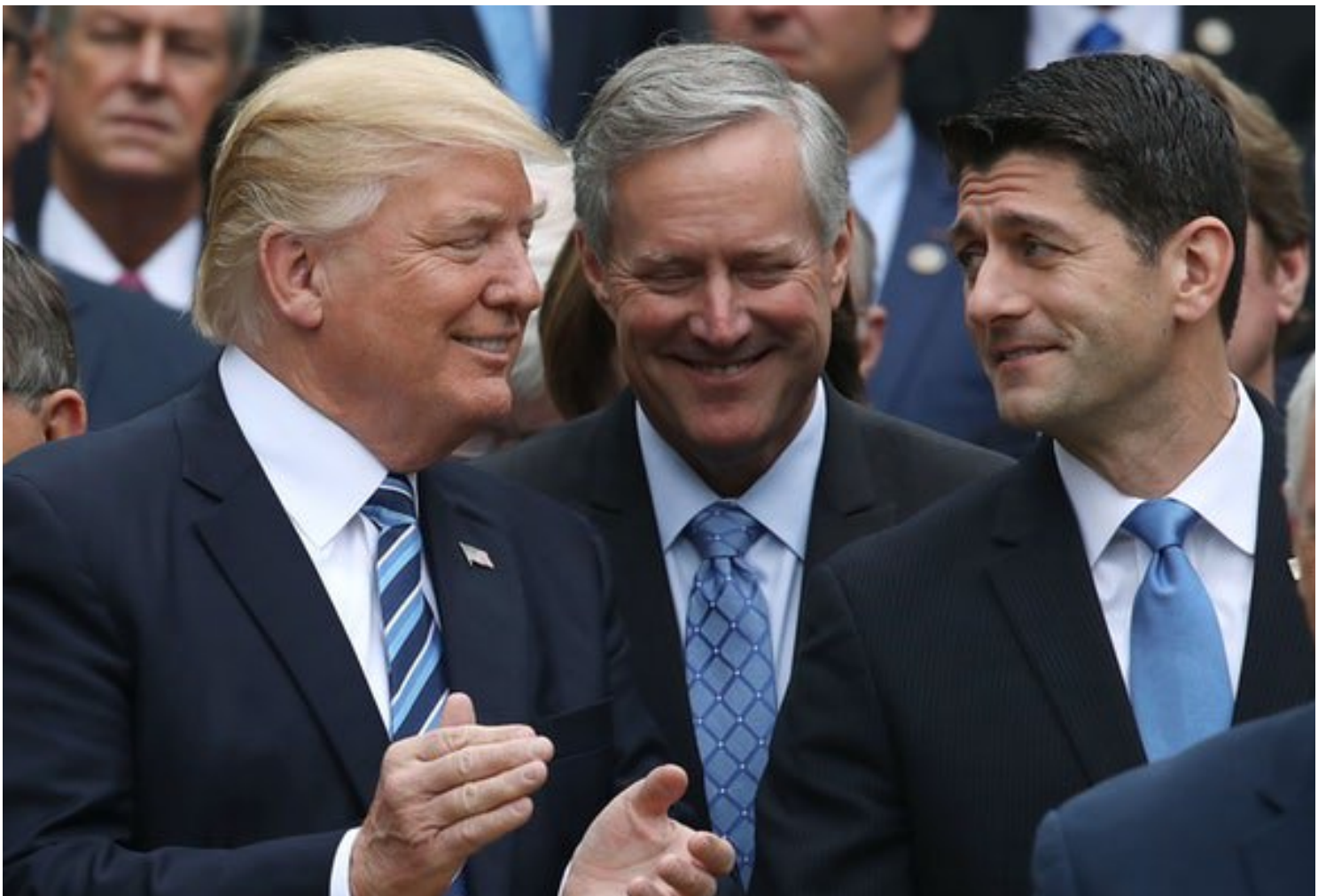
From this reporting, it seems likely that it was never Erdogan's intention to get the United States to withdraw. Rather he made the demand as a bargaining move, to get other, lesser goals. Trump, displaying his mastery of the art of the deal, gave in to Erdogan's maximum position.

The White House denies the accuracy of AP's account.



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Mark Wilson/Getty

Looming government shutdown is the “last gasp” of the Freedom Caucus. According to *Politico*, the driving cause of the looming partial government shutdown is the Freedom Caucus, a group of far-right Republicans in the House who convinced President Donald Trump to buck GOP leadership by taking a hardline position on funding the border wall.

On Thursday, Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows phoned the president. At that point, Trump was unhappy with the compromise Republican leaders had agreed to but was willing to go along with it, despite criticism from the right-wing media. “Meadows, who is close with the president and was recently in the running to be his next chief of staff, urged Trump to make a stand now before Democrats took the House in January — just as he had the night before and multiple times earlier in the week,” *Politico* reports. “Stick to your guns, the North Carolina Republican told the president, according to a source familiar with the conversation. We conservatives will have your back. And now is the last best chance to fight.”

The shutdown can be seen as the latest in a string of battles between the Freedom Caucus and GOP leaders that have hamstrung Washington over the last few years. These clashes have made it impossible to reach compromises on issues like immigration, and have hobbled the last two Republican House speakers, John Boehner and Paul Ryan.

Outgoing Republican Congressman Carlos Curbelo summed up the situation by telling *Politico*, “Our Freedom Caucus colleagues, they probably know that their relevance is going to be completely diminished next Congress, so this is kind of like a last gasp, but we know how this ends.” *Politico* itself sums up the situation thus: “House Republicans as of Thursday night were embracing the chaos.”

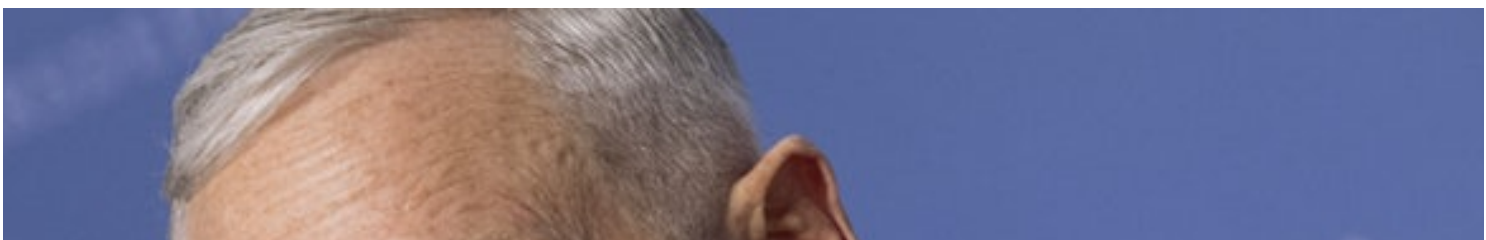


December 20, 2018



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Jim Watson - Pool/Getty

Jim Mattis resigns as secretary of defense with a letter critical of Trumpian foreign policy. Mattis resigned amid reports that he is unhappy with the president's push for a quick withdrawal from Syria. Commenting on the matter, President Donald Trump praised Mattis's service:



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Dec 20, 2018

General Jim Mattis will be retiring, with distinction, at the end of February, after having served my Administration as Secretary of Defense for the past two years. During Jim's tenure, tremendous progress has been made, especially with respect to the purchase of new fighting....



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

....equipment. General Mattis was a great help to me in getting allies and other countries to pay their share of military obligations. A new Secretary of Defense will be named shortly. I greatly thank Jim for his service!

73.2K 6:21 PM - Dec 20, 2018

[35.1K people are talking about this](#)

There are speculations that Mattis's resignation wasn't voluntary and that he was fired:



Namo Abdulla

@namo_abdulla

[@barbarastarrcnn](#), Pentagon correspondent for CNN, Jim Mattis is not retiring, he is being "pushed out."

295 6:26 PM - Dec 20, 2018

296 people are talking about this

Mattis's resignation letter is notable for scanting any praise of the president (as is customary in the genre) and highlighting policy differences.

Part of the letter reads:

One core belief I have always held is that our strength as a nation is inextricably linked to the strength of our unique and comprehensive system of alliances and partnerships. While the US remains the indispensable nation in the free world, we cannot protect our interests or serve that role effectively without maintaining strong alliances and showing respect to those allies. Like you, I have said from the beginning that the armed forces of the United States should not be the policeman of the world. Instead, we must use all tools of American power to provide for the common defense, including providing effective leadership to our alliances. 29 democracies demonstrated that strength in their commitment to fighting alongside us following the 9-11 attack on America. The Defeat-ISIS coalition of 74 nations is further proof.

Similarly, I believe we must be resolute and unambiguous in our approach to those countries whose strategic interests are increasingly in tension with ours. It is clear that China and Russia, for example, want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model gaining veto authority over other nations economic, diplomatic, and security decisions to promote their own interests at the expense of their neighbors, America and our allies. That is why we must use all the tools of American power to provide for the common defense.

My views on treating allies with respect and also being clear-eyed about both malign actors and strategic competitors are strongly held and informed by over four decades of immersion in these issues. We must do everything possible to advance an international order that is most conducive to our security, prosperity and values, and we are strengthened in this effort by the solidarity of our alliances.

Because you have the right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours on these and other subjects, I believe it is right for me to step down from my position

It's hard to read this passage as anything other than a repudiation of Trump's foreign policy.



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joe Raedle/Getty

A Democratic group imitated Russian disinformation techniques in a Senate race. *The New York Times* is reporting that during the 2017 special election in Alabama, a group of Democrats experimented with social media disinformation, explicitly imitating Russian tactics used in the 2016 presidential election.

“The secret project, carried out on Facebook and Twitter, was likely too small to have a significant effect on the race, in which the Democratic candidate it was designed to help, Doug Jones, edged out the Republican, Roy S. Moore,” the *Times* reports. “But it was a sign that American political operatives of both parties have paid close attention to the Russian methods, which some fear may come to taint elections in the United States.”

An internal report from the project admits, “We orchestrated an elaborate ‘false flag’ operation that planted the idea that the Moore campaign was amplified on social media by a Russian botnet.”

One technique used was to promote a conservative write-in candidate as an alternative to Roy Moore. The

project had a budget of \$100,000, a minuscule figure in a race that saw more than \$50 million spent.

Renée DiResta, who knows some of the people involved in the project, claims the main intent was to test tactics. “My understanding was that they were going to investigate to what extent they could grow audiences for Facebook pages using sensational news,” she told the *Times*. She does admit that some of her fellow Democrats believed they need to “fight fire with fire.”

Interestingly, one of the figures involved in the project is Jonathon Morgan, described by the *Times* as “the chief executive of New Knowledge, a small cyber security firm that wrote a scathing account of Russia’s social media operations in the 2016 election that was released this week by the Senate Intelligence Committee.”



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Chip Somodevilla/Getty

Partial government shutdown looms as Trump refuses to budge on the border wall. Attempts to avert a year-end partial shutdown of the government are in shambles after the president told congressional leaders that he won't sign a stopgap resolution because it doesn't address his agenda of funding the border wall.

"House Speaker Paul Ryan says after leaving a meeting with Trump at the White House that he and other leaders are going to go back to Capitol Hill to 'work on adding border security' to the legislation," *The Washington Post* reports. "Trump is facing a backlash from conservative supporters who've urging to him to stick with an earlier pledge to force a shutdown in hopes of securing money for his long-promised border wall."



NBC News
@NBCNews

BREAKING: Speaker Ryan says President Trump will not sign short-term continuing resolution passed by Senate.

[nbcnews.to/2AiA8IT](https://www.nbcnews.com/2AiA8IT)

1,554 2:26 PM - Dec 20, 2018

1,630 people are talking about this

Politico speculates that a possible scenario might run like this: "[T]he GOP is going to put \$5 billion in the stopgap somehow. That might or might not pass the House—attendance is down big time, with 52 people missing the last vote this morning. If the bill does clear the House, it will go to the Senate, where it will not go

anywhere. Then there will be a choice: Enough Republicans get on board with Democrats to pass the stopgap, or keep the government shut down until Jan. 3, when Nancy Pelosi will be able to open it up.”



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Alex Wong/Getty

Trump's attorney general nominee wrote memo attacking scope of Mueller investigation. *The Wall Street Journal* is reporting that William Barr wrote a memo earlier this year arguing that special counsel Robert Mueller should not investigate obstruction of justice under the Trump administration. Barr wrote the memo as a private citizen, sending in unsolicited advice, but it could still impact his Senate confirmation. It's possible the Senate could demand he recuse himself from oversight of the Mueller investigation as the price of confirmation.

In the memo, Barr wrote, “Mueller should not be permitted to demand that the President submit to interrogation about alleged obstruction.” As the *Journal* notes. “Mr. Barr’s memo is peppered with strongly

investigation and the legal system. The occasional note, that Barr's memo is peppered with strongly worded phrases about the peril he sees in Mr. Mueller's reading of the law, as he understood it. He described Mr. Mueller's approach as 'grossly irresponsible' with 'potentially disastrous implications' for the executive branch."

Barr is not the only legal expert to think this, but his view is controversial. On Monday, the Washington advocacy group Protect Democracy released a white paper explaining why arguments of the sort Barr made are wrong.

"A president's abuse of his powers to obstruct an investigation into his own crimes puts him above the law in a way that is anathema to our constitutional scheme," the white paper argues. "History, law, and constitutional principles make it clear that such behavior demands accountability and could be grounds for impeachment. When credible allegations of abuses of power to obstruct justice arise, Congress must conduct its own investigation and weigh the myriad factual and political questions presented by the president's behavior to determine whether, under the circumstances, it should be."

Responding to the *Journal* article, Democratic Senator Mark Warner tweeted:



Mark Warner
@MarkWarner

It's becoming pretty clear that the President is basing his choices for leadership at the Justice Department on candidates' criticism of the Mueller investigation. [wsj.com/articles/trump...](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump...)

596 12:13 PM - Dec 20, 2018

334 people are talking about this



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5 months ago





SAUL LOEB/AFP/Getty

North Korea and Russia both denounce Trump's nuclear policy. On Thursday, the North Korean government issued an unusually fierce statement saying that they would not denuclearize until the United States first removed its nuclear weapons targeting their country. The same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that American's announced attention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty raises the likelihood of nuclear war.

The North Korean statement is an outgrowth of the Trump administration's overselling of the agreement reached between the United States, North Korea, and South Korea in the Singapore summit in June. At that summit, the parties agreed to "complete denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula, a vague statement that made no commitment as to time frame or sequencing.

"The United States must now recognize the accurate meaning of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and especially, must study geography," the North Korean statement asserts. "When we talk about the Korean Peninsula, it includes the territory of our republic and also the entire region of (South Korea) where the United States has placed its invasive force, including nuclear weapons. When we talk about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, it means the removal of all sources of nuclear threat, not only from the South and North but also from areas neighboring the Korean Peninsula."

The statement added, "By replacing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula with 'the denuclearization of north Korea,' the U.S. tries to cause the optical illusion of the people in their view of the DPRK-U.S. relations."



e122011 - It Would Be Better to Search for New Way Rather than Facing Barrier on Old Way

Pyongyang, December 20 (KCNA) -- A commentary "It would be better to search for a new way rather than facing a barrier in the old way" was made public by Jong Hyon on Thursday. The "handshake of epochal significance" between the top leaders of the DPRK and the U.S., which had been at the greatest odds on earth, in Singapore on June 12 and the subsequent publication of the DPRK-U.S. joint statement evoked the world's repercussion as a "strong message of peace" and "blessings on humankind", the commentary said, and went on: Six months have passed since then, but in the course of analyzing in detail the hardly understandable words and acts the U.S. made when approaching the DPRK-U.S. relations and its improper behaviors seen during negotiations, we could see what the knotty problem is. It was the U.S. misguided understanding of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.



Jonathan Cheng
@JChengWSJ

And here's the full English-language text of N. Korea's latest statement about stalled negotiations with Washington, just after the U.S.'s lead negotiator arrived in S. Korea.

85 6:01 AM - Dec 20, 2018

102 people are talking about this

As Suki Kim recently noted in *The New Republic*, both the Trump administration and the government of South Korean government of Moon Jae-in have heavily invested in the Singapore deal. The Associated Press observes that the North Korean statement "raises credibility problems for the liberal South Korean government, which has continuously claimed that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is genuinely interested in negotiating away his nuclear weapons as Seoul tries to sustain a positive atmosphere for dialogue."

Putin's press conference is equally ominous. As *The New York Times* reports:

He also noted that Western analysts are talking about the possibility of using low-yield nuclear weapons.

Putin warned that "there is a trend of lowering the threshold" of using nuclear weapons, adding that "lowering the threshold could lead to a global nuclear catastrophe."

Putin also emphasized that the U.S. pondering the use of ballistic missiles with conventional warheads, saying that the launch of such a missile could be mistaken for the launch of a nuclear-tipped one and trigger a global catastrophe.



December 19, 2018



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5 months ago



PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/Getty

Ann Coulter and Donald Trump part ways, again. In a radio interview on Monday, the hard-right columnist Ann Coulter said she wouldn't vote for Donald Trump if he doesn't build his promised border wall. "They're about to have a country where no Republican will ever be elected president again," Coulter said. "Trump will just have been a joke presidency who scammed the American people, amused the populists for a while, but he'll have no legacy whatsoever."

When news of Coulter's criticism aired, Trump or someone who handles these matters for him seems to have unfollowed Coulter on Twitter:



Brian Stelter

@brianstelter

Coulter said "Trump will very likely not finish his term and definitely not be elected to a second term." Fox cited her comments around 7:05. Then this...

Trump Alert @TrumpsAlert

realDonaldTrump appears to no longer follow @AnnCoulter.
(This bot cannot tell if this was an unfollow, suspension or block.)

10.3K 8:52 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[3,361 people are talking about this](#)

This isn't the first time Coulter and Trump have had a split. In August 2016, then-candidate Trump flirted with a more moderate immigration stance, including amnesty for undocumented immigrants. Coulter on a dime turned fiercely anti-Trump and started lambasting him as soft on immigration.



Ann Coulter

@AnnCoulter

It's not "amnesty." It's "comprehensive immigration reform"!!!! Trump: "they have to pay taxes, there's no amnesty."

1,064 11:57 PM - Aug 24, 2016

[873 people are talking about this](#)



Ann Coulter

@AnnCoulter

Trump: "they have to pay taxes, there's no amnesty" [Pro Tip: "Back taxes" means we pay illegals \$30k apiece in EITC.]

803 11:56 PM - Aug 24, 2016

[542 people are talking about this](#)

Coulter's barrage of criticism in 2016 actually had a positive impact from her point of view: Trump quickly gave up moderation and returned to his nativist stance. Coulter worked as an effective enforcer of ideological rectitude. Perhaps that's her goal now as well.



Jeet Heer

5 months ago



Kevin Dietsch-Pool/Getty

Trump is building a wall against a primary challenge, whether he needs to or not. Two significant developments show that President Donald Trump's campaign is worried about a primary challenge before the 2020 election. First, *Politico* is reporting that the Trump campaign is fusing with the Republican National Committee. Secondly, *The Washington Examiner* notes that the South Carolina GOP might do away with its primary altogether.

According to *Politico*, "the Trump reelection campaign and the RNC will merge their field and fundraising programs into a joint outfit dubbed Trump Victory. The two teams will also share office space rather than operate out of separate buildings, as has been custom." The news outlet adds that, "With talk of a primary

challenge to Trump simmering, the act of formally tying the president's reelection campaign to the resource-rich national party will make it only harder for would-be Republican opponents to mount a bid."

Meanwhile, as *The Washington Examiner* notes, the South Carolina GOP "could cancel its marquee presidential nominating contest in 2020 in a move to protect President Trump from any primary challengers." The website cites the precedent of Iowa not issuing ballots in 1992 with the goal of protecting then-incumbent President George H. W. Bush and South Carolina cancelling its primary in 2004 to shield George W. Bush.

The intriguing question from this news is why the Trump campaign is working so hard to guard against a primary challenge. After all, as the *Examiner* rightly notes, "The president is solid with Republican voters and would almost certainly defeat any intraparty opposition."

As CNN reported on Tuesday,

President Donald Trump continues to look in prime position to win his party's nomination for president in 2020. While Republicans such as John Kasich may run, a look at the numbers reveals they have a tough road ahead of them.

CNN's latest Iowa poll shows little room for a successful primary challenge in the first in nation caucus. Trump scored an 81% approval rating among registered Republicans. The vast majority, 67%, of Republicans also said that they would definitely vote to re-elect Trump.

However commanding a lead he has in polls of Republican voters, Trump isn't taking any chances and is gearing up to create a fortress to keep out any challengers. Ironically, it's possible that the president and his team have bought into the Never Trump fantasy scenarios of a party revolt.



Jeet Heer

5 months ago





Spencer Platt/Getty

Is the boycott of Tucker Carlson and Fox News counterproductive? The ongoing advertiser boycott of the Fox News show, sparked by anti-immigrant comments Carlson made last week, has sparked a debate among progressives and journalists about tactics.

Polling guru Nate Silver suggests that boycotting Carlson will lead to ever more boycotts culminating in a blander media landscape:



Nate Silver

@NateSilver538

Jack is right. The logical endpoint of deeming advertisers to have endorsed the political messages of the shows they run ads on is that only milquetoast both-sidesism with a pro-corporate bent will be advertising-supported, if any political content is ad-supported at all.

Jack Shafer @jackshafer

I didn't like the organized advertiser boycotts against Bill O'Reilly and I don't like the ones against Tucker Carlson.
politi.co/2LnVOYc

3,372 9:30 PM - Dec 18, 2018

[3,745 people are talking about this](#)

Silver maintained his position in the face of many critiques:



Nate Silver



@NateSilver538

I tend to agree that Tucker is a racist, or at least that he convincingly plays a racist on TV.

However, I don't want the PR department of Applebee's deciding for us all what's racist vs. legitimate/acceptable political speech.

Norman Ornstein @NormOrnstein

I disagree. This is not a boycott because of political viewpoint. No calls for boycott of Hannity. This is a set of boycotts because of disgusting personal behavior and disgusting racism. Very different. [twitter.com/NateSilver538/...](https://twitter.com/NateSilver538/)

2,783 10:10 PM - Dec 18, 2018

[3,190 people are talking about this](#)



Nate Silver

@NateSilver538

In fact, I am gay, and I'm just old enough (40) to remember when conservative groups urged boycotts of advertisers and networks who were seen as promoting LGBTQ or other "nontraditional" lifestyles. That strongly influences my views on this subject! nbcnews.to/2QBRlIb

Sleeping Giants @slpng_giants

Replying to @NateSilver538

You are speaking as a publisher, not a citizen. If you're a person of color or a member of the LGBTQ community or an immigrant, these companies are literally footing the bill for you to be vilified every week. Bigotry should not be deemed political. That's a big part of the issue

5,024 1:28 AM - Dec 19, 2018

[1,264 people are talking about this](#)

Writer Talia Lavin was among the many who took issue with Silver:



Talia Lavin

@chick_in_kiev

 @chuck_in_nyc

There's a difference between "milquetoast both-sidesism" and "outright white naitonalism" though. Like, a long mile, even

Nate Silver @NateSilver538

Jack is right. The logical endpoint of deeming advertisers to have endorsed the political messages of the shows they run ads on is that only milquetoast both-sidesism with a pro-corporate bent will be advertising-supported, if any political content is ad-supported at all. [twitter.com/jackshafer/sta...](https://twitter.com/jackshafer/status/1094444444444444444)

486 10:58 PM - Dec 18, 2018

[41 people are talking about this](#)

Jumping off from a tweet by Jelani Cobb of *The New Yorker*, political scientist Henry Farrell wrote a meaty Twitter thread arguing that boycotts make sense given the unique problem of Fox News, an extremist outlet that presents itself as a mainstream news source.



Henry Farrell
@henryfarrell

1. Short thread on the Fox Straddle. There's another problem. Nate's broader claim is that we'll end up in a "bad equilibrium" where "only milquetoast both-sidesism with a pro-corporate bent will be advertising-supported, if any political content is ad-supported at all"

jelani cobb @jelani9

But Nate, this is akin to saying black people in Montgomery should not have boycotted busses because white people were already boycotting black schools. The fact that a tactic can be used for just or unjust purposes doesn't mean you should never engage it. [twitter.com/NateSilver538/...](https://twitter.com/NateSilver538/status/1094444444444444444)

460 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[213 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell
@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

2. That rests on an implausible understanding of the Fox News phenomenon. Here's an alternative take. As per historical research of [@pastpunditry](#) and others, the major continuing problem of radical conservative content before Fox was that there was no mass market for it.

191 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[23 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

3. Hence, a variety of business models, involving different mixes of patronage, leveraging of regulatory requirements for public content, and, as per [@rickperlstein](#), scam peddling.

134 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[17 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

4. Fox News has solved this problem - but through a jiu-jitsu trick where it simultaneously presents itself as a mainstream news channel (and howls like crazy when it is treated differently), while serving up a hot mess of ideologically loaded crazy.

304 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[58 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

5. It hence has to straddle two markets. On the one hand, it has to present itself as mainstream to take advantage of ad revenues that help maintain its profitability together

with cable fees. On the other, it has to guard its right flank against new media that can outcrazy it.

192 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[30 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

6. As per [@YBenkler](#) research, Fox was temporarily challenged during the 2016 elections by Breitbart, which was younger, hungrier and more adept with WWW (see also [@gabrielsherman](#)). There were real fears that audience might migrate to some Bannon or Sinclair funded competitor.

148 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[23 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

7. So what this suggests is that Fox News is nearly uniquely vulnerable to advertiser attacks, because they widen the fissure in its underlying business model. Fox has to straddle the quite different markets for radical right crazy and the 'mainstream' engaging in a perpetual ...

252 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

[56 people are talking about this](#)



Henry Farrell

@henryfarrell

Replying to @henryfarrell

8. and very difficult balancing act of faux-outrage and dissimulation. This is why we're not going to see a race to Nate's equilibrium - very few other websites are going to be as vulnerable as Fox, because very few have to pull off

some equivalent of the Fox Straddle. Finis.

305 1:04 PM - Dec 19, 2018

35 people are talking about this



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the civically exhausted**

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